

The Paper Dress Form

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The home made paper dress form is not a novelty to the home dress-maker. Thousands of such forms have been made from the directions given in a former Agricultural Extension Service bulletin. However, the demand for that bulletin was so persistent that this revised edition is offered. It is a guide for those who make a paper dress form for the first time and will be helpful to those who desire an improved style of dress form.

The Paper Dress Form

THE greatest difficulty in home dressmaking is fitting one's self. A dress form—a perfect likeness of the body of the person to be fitted—assists the home dressmaker to solve some of the fitting problems.

As the person for whom and on whom the form is made must stand during the process of making, the dress form should be made as quickly as possible. To do this, the services of from two to six persons are required, and all materials should be at hand.

Materials

The materials necessary for making a paper dress form are as follows:

Large roll of gummed paper.

Undervest.

Material for neck foundation.

Cardboard for base of form.

One-half pint of shellac or varnish.

Paper 1 inch wide and of 50-pound weight is preferred, although $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch paper may be used. This may be secured at most stationery stores.

A light-weight, tight-fitting, knit undervest with high neck and short sleeves is necessary. Muslin or knit pieces from the bottom or the sleeves of the shirt may be used as foundation material for the neck.

Special sets of material for making dress forms are on the market. These sets contain a roll of gummed paper and a knit undervest with short sleeves and with a fitted collar foundation attached.

In addition to the above a piece of stiff cardboard about 18 by 24 inches, to form the base of the form, if necessary.

Either shellac or varnish may be used on the outside of the form, but, as shellac dries almost immediately, it most often is used. If a day or more may be allowed for the varnish to dry and harden, it may be used to advantage as it is more elastic than shellac.

Equipment

Water container and small sponge.

Pencil.

Needle and thread.

Scissors.

Yardstick.

Tapeline.

Small brush for shellac.

Washbasin.

Towel.

Preparation for the Making of Paper Dress Form

It is highly desirable to have everything in readiness before starting the making of the form. With this in mind the following suggestions should be carried out in full.

Cut half the roll of gummed paper into strips from 6 to 18 inches long with diagonal ends. Cut four strips long enough to reach from the base of the neck to the base of the form in the center front and center back, and an additional long strip for the

waist line. If paper more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, is used, cut in two lengthwise enough of the 6-inch strips to make the collar.

As the dress form is to be made on the person, the model should wear comfortable shoes with heels the height she usually wears. She should remove her outer garments, and put on the undervest. The undergarments worn under the vest should be smooth and well fitting.

A corset or corsette and a tight fitting corset cover or brassiere make the best foundation over which the dress form is made.

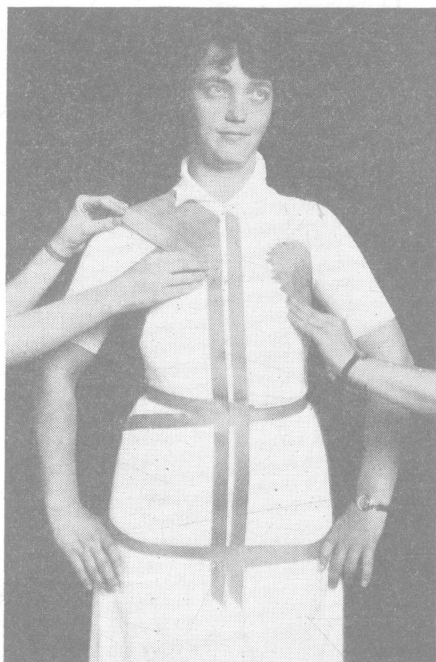


Fig. 1.—Showing the first tapes on the undervest. The vertical strips are left $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart. Note the method of applying the paper; first, under the arms, and second, over the shoulder.

To make it easier to remove the form when finished cut off buttons and buttonhole strips from the undervest. Put it on and sew up the opening.

Take a snug waist measure at the normal waist line and record the measurement.

Conveniently arrange all materials and equipment.

Construction of Form

Paste a long strip of gummed paper around the waist at the normal waist line to form a tight belt, and another long strip around the fullest part of the hips to mark the lower edge of the form. Paste a long strip vertically on each side $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from center line of front and back. The $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch spaces thus made may be left partly

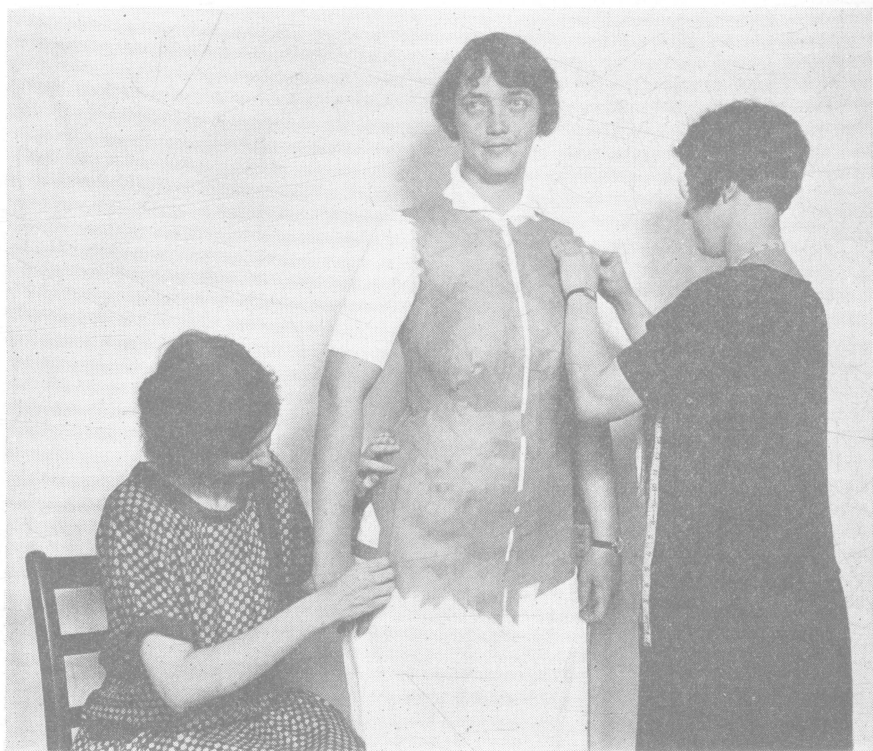


Fig. 2.—Finishing the lower part of the form and starting the arms.

uncovered, so that it will be possible to cut between them easily and remove the halves of the dress form.

Start building up the underarm of the form first, so that if the arms are raised the shoulder line will not be broken. This is shown at the right in Fig. 1.

Paste the strips so that they overlap from one-half to two-thirds the width of the strip, shown at the left of Fig. 1. This also shows the second area to be covered with paper. Press each strip

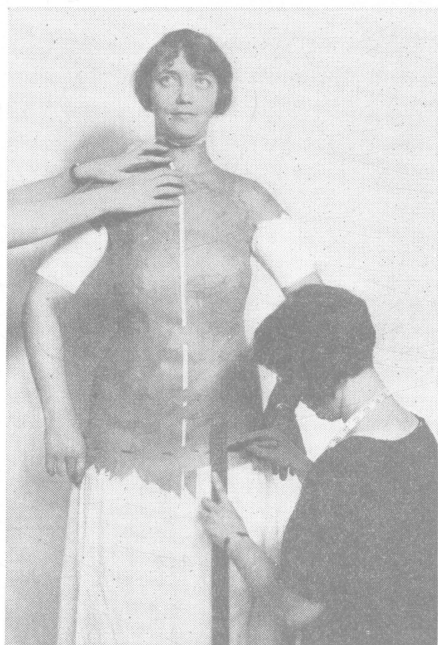


Fig. 3.—Finishing the neck. Note the sleeve cap.

firmly in place. It may be necessary to clip the edges of the strips in some places to make them lie smooth.

Have model then hold her arms slightly away from her sides. This may be done by bending her elbows a little and resting her hands on the lower part of her hips (see Fig. 1). Care should be taken not to raise the shoulders.

Build up the shoulders and extend the form to cover a small portion of the upper arm. For most figures it is convenient to start strips at the shoulder near the base of the neck and slant diagonally to the center front and back.

Except for the $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch spaces in the front and back, paste strips of gummed paper over the entire vest, front and back (see Fig. 2).

Make the dress form firm enough to retain its shape when removed from the figure. When 50-pound quality paper is used and the edge of each strip is lapped one-half its width, one layer of paper is enough before form is removed. When lighter weight paper is used a second layer of paper should be added before the form is removed.

Unless the shirt already has a collar attached, cover the neck with a piece of material (see Fig. 2), fitting it carefully and attaching it to the form with gummed paper. Cover this collar foundation with strips $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide, placing them at right angles to the neck line, or diagonally across it. Allow them to extend one or two inches below it.

Mark the hip line so that it will be an equal distance from the floor all around (see Fig. 3). This hip line should be at the fullest part of the hips. Measure the distance from the hip line to the floor and record this measurement. Draw short lines at intervals across the center front and back as a guide for joining the halves of the form.

Cut through the $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch spaces left uncovered in the center front and back of the form (see Fig. 4). Carefully remove the halves. Cut along marked hip line.

Paste a layer of gummed paper over the entire inside of form. Hold the halves of the form up to the light to find the thin spots. Reinforce these thin spots with additional layers of paper, pasted on the inside of the form. This does not add to the size of the form, but adds strength to it.

Measure the waist line on the halves of the form. If the waist measure of the form is larger than the recorded waist measure, cut a strip equal to one-quarter of the difference from each side of the front and back. Be sure form is not larger than body measurement.

With short strips of the gummed paper join the halves of the form, matching them at the pencil lines (see Fig. 5). Reinforce the center lines with vertical strips of gummed paper pasted to inside of form.

Trim the edges of the neck and armholes and bind with short strips of gummed paper $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide (see Fig. 5).

To make a base for the form, place it upright on the piece of cardboard and trace around the bottom of the form. Mark the front, back, right, and left sides of the base. Cut the cardboard on the traced line and fit it into the bottom of the form, trimming off the edges of the cardboard if necessary. Attach the base to the form with short strips of gummed paper. The base may be made of wood.

When the form is dry, varnish or shellac it to protect it from dampness and to make it firmer.

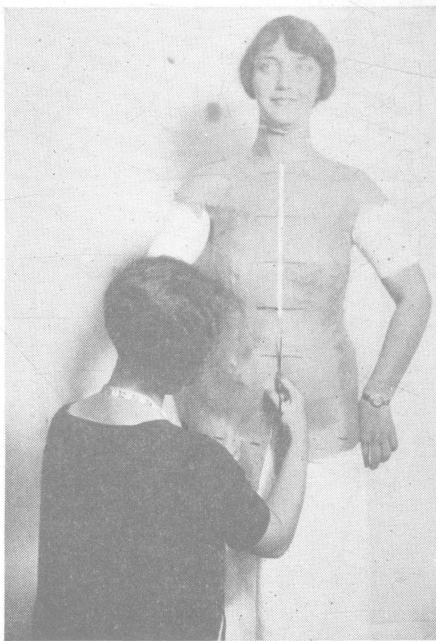


Fig. 4.—Cutting the form up front and back to remove. Note marks across opening to be matched later and at hip line for base of form.

For use in fitting waists the form may be placed on a table. To make it convenient for fitting dresses or skirts it is necessary to mount the form on a standard. Make the standard the exact height of the distance from the hip line to the floor (see illustration on page 1).

Simple standards on the general order of a Christmas tree holder and a pole are very satisfactory. Yardsticks attached to the base of the form and to a block of wood on the floor may be used both as a gauge and standard.

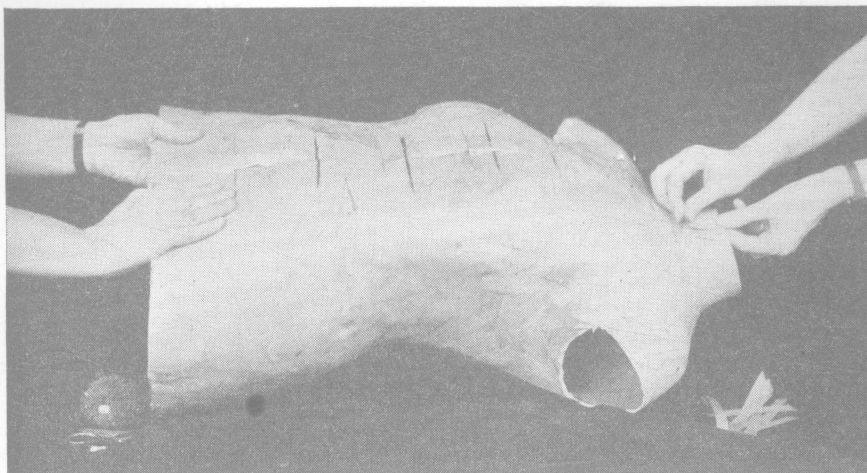


Fig 5.—Putting form together—lines must match.

Use of Form

A light weight gauze undervest put on over the finished form protects the form and gives a foundation to which fabrics may be pinned in fitting. The position of shoulder seam, armseye, under-arm seam, and normal waist line may be indicated on the form in pencil or with narrow tape.

The form may be used for fitting new garments, pattern alteration, draping, adjusting collars, girdles, and vests or remodeling out-of-style garments, and altering ready-to-wear garments.